

March 20, 2003

To: Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, Chair
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: David E. Janssen
Chief Administrative Officer

INDIGENT DEFENSE REPRESENTATION

On March 4, 2003, on motion of Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, your Board instructed this office to report within two weeks on the cost of hiring additional or alternative public defenders to handle indigent defense cases rather than contracting the cases to private attorneys.

My office has looked at the County's overall cost to provide constitutionally-mandated legal defense services to indigent persons. The elimination of Public Defender unavailability is significantly more cost effective than allowing the cases to be handled by private attorneys. Therefore, the 2003-04 County Proposed Budget will include a recommendation to provide the Public Defender with additional resources to eliminate unavailability on a countywide basis.

We are also looking at the cost effectiveness of expanding the Alternate Public Defender to court locations currently covered by private attorneys panels under contract to the County and will present our recommendations in the 2003-04 County Proposed Budget.

Please let me know if you have any questions or your staff may call Rosemary Gutierrez at (213) 974-1148.

DEJ:DL
RMG:ljp

c: Public Defender
Alternate Public Defender
Indigent defense.bm